

F-1 Visa Renewal Instructions

What Is Visa Renewal?

An F-1 visa is used to enter the United States. In most cases you are permitted to remain in the U.S., even if your visa expires, as long as you continue to maintain F-1 status (called “Duration of Status”).

If you leave the U.S. on an expired visa, you must apply for a new visa before you can return.

Always be aware of the date when your F-1 visa will expire. You may not plan on traveling abroad, but you never know when an emergency situation will arise, requiring you to leave the U.S. unexpectedly.

How Do I Renew My Visa?

- You must **return to your home country** to apply for a new visa.
- Schedule a **visa appointment with the U.S. Embassy** in your country before you depart the U.S.
- Provide OIA with **updated financial documentation** (proof of funding for the following year/semester)
- Schedule an appointment with OIA to obtain a **new Form I-20** created for the purpose of visa renewal and discuss what to expect at your visa appointment.

Documents to Prepare for Visa Appointment

1. **Valid Passport**
2. **Visa Renewal I-20**
3. **Proof of Funding**
 - a. Costs for a full academic year are included on your Form I-20. Your current I-20 reflects costs for your first year at NPU. Your new I-20 must reflect costs and funding for the coming academic year/semester.
 - b. Have your sponsor(s) prepare a new Affidavit of Support: <https://www.northpark.edu/wp-content/uploads/npuUGinternational.pdf> along with a letter from their bank or copy of their bank statement showing proof of funds.
 - c. Check to confirm any scholarship amounts.
4. **I-901 SEVIS Receipt**
 - a. You must present receipt of payment of the I-901 SEVIS fee. You would have received this the year you first applied for a visa. The receipt serves as proof that you do not have to pay a new fee.
 - b. Please note, however, that you still need to pay the visa fee: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/fees/fees-visa-services.html>
5. **Verification of Enrollment at North Park**
 - a. You can obtain verification of enrollment from Student Services
 - b. If you are abroad contact Student Services at: records@northpark.edu. They can send you the document electronically within 1-2 days of your request.
6. **Class Schedule**
 - a. Print a copy of your academic schedule from WebAdvisor for the upcoming semester to show you will return to the U.S. to continue your studies.
7. **Optional:** If there are unusual circumstances surrounding your visa renewal application or educational program, you may also request a letter of explanation from the International Office. If you are renewing your visa in a timely matter and are making normal progress in your studies, request a letter of support from OIA .

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Important Information about Visa Renewal

Knowing the Risks

Issuance of an F-1 visa is never guaranteed, even in cases of visa renewal.

- You must show that you intend to participate in only activities that are allowed in F-1 visa status.
- Every time you apply for an F-1 visa, you are assumed to have “nonimmigrant intent.” In order to be issued a visa, you must convince the consular official that you intend to return to your home country at the end of your studies (and any period of approved practical training).

Preparing for the Visa Interview

Prepare to answer the following questions at your interview:

- Why did you decide to attend North Park University?
- What are you studying at North Park, and what do you plan to do with your degree once you finish your studies?
- How will your studies at North Park prepare you for life in your home country?
- What ties do you have to your home country? Do you have family at home? Do you or your family own property, or will you inherit property in the future? Do you have a job lined up at home for when you return?

Visa Denial

If your application for an F-1 visa (first time or renewal) is denied, it is very important that you get information from the consular official regarding your denial. She or he should put in writing the cause of your denial. The following denials are the most common:

Type of Denial	What It Means	What You Can Do
214b	You did not convince the consular official that you intend to return to your home country (leave the U.S.) at the end of your studies.	You are welcome to apply again, as soon as you believe your circumstances have changed, or when you think you can explain your situation in a different way. All new applications carry the same visa fee. Be sure that you explain clearly why you are studying at North Park, why you chose your field of study, how your program at North Park will prepare you to return to your home country, why you will return to your home country (job, family, property, etc.).
221g	Additional information is needed.	Your visa hasn't actually been denied, but the consular official can't make a decision on approving or denying your application until more information is presented. Make sure you pay very close attention to anything the consular official asks you to do. You may have to submit additional

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		documents, or you may have to wait for your application to be assessed by another office.
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Note: The consular officers at the U.S. Embassy abroad are the only people who can make decisions on your eligibility for an F-1 visa. Even if North Park University has said that you are eligible to study here, North Park officials cannot override a consular official's decision on your visa application. In most cases (especially 214b denials) we will not contact the consulate on your behalf, as consular officials are required to protect your privacy and cannot disclose information about your visa interview or application to a third party.